BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Louis Kahanamoku, 78, former beach boy and U.S. Marshal

"Number one, we all wanted to learn to swim. Number two, we wanted to learn to surf. Every kid that lived down that area. We played a little baseball. You know, we choose up [sides]. Get different districts. Kālia, you go out and played that bunch, the Stonewall Gang. And then we had another bunch go play the gang up in Kalihi. But us, we want to play the tough guys. Kalihi and Kaka'ako, guarantee going to be a fight, so we want to get in it."

Louis Ko'oliko Kahanamoku, Hawaiian, the eighth of nine children born to Julia Pa'akonia Kahanamoku and Duke Kahanamoku Sr., was born April 11, 1908 in Kālia, Waikīkī, O'ahu. His oldest brother, the late Duke Paoa Kahanamoku, was the famous swimmer, surfer and Olympian. Louis Kahanamoku, like his brother, was active in water sports and beach boy activities.

The Kahanamoku home was located on Ala Moana Boulevard (then called "Beach Road") near Kālia Road. Their neighbors were the Paoa, Simerson and Harbottle families.

Kahanamoku attended Ka'ahumanu, St. Louis and Punahou Schools. Following his graduation from Punahou in 1929, he earned money playing music on ships and on the beach. Kahanamoku eventually worked as a deputy U.S. Marshal.

Today, Kahanamoku makes his home in Keauhou, Kona. He is active with Kauikeaouli Canoe Club there.

Tape No. 13-58-1-85 and 13-59-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Louis Ko'oliko Kahanamoku (LK)

May 20, 1985

Keauhou, Kona, Hawai'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Louis Kahanamoku on May 20, 1985, and we're at the Kauikeaouli Canoe Club in Keauhou, Kona, Hawai'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, where were you born and when were you born?

LK: I was born in Waikīkī in the Kālia district. I was born in Kālia. I was born April 11, 1908. So that makes me what? Seventy-six? (Laughs) [LK is now seventy-seven.]

WN: Tell me something about your father.

LK: Well, frankly, you know, we were such young boys at the time, and I don't remember too much. Only I remember him coming home from work. Daddy was a captain on the police force in Honolulu. What I remember of Daddy was that we always waited for him to come home from work. Maybe we went through his pockets, got some gum, I don't know what it was, but always waiting for him. Our daddy died, gee, what? Nineteen fourteen? Yeah, I think I was about six years old. Yeah, was during the war [World War I] or right before the war. So, that's what we all regret so much, we didn't see or live with Daddy long enough when we grew up. Duke [Kahanamoku, LK's oldest brother] was old enough. Duke was in his twenties already. Daddy was more or less his trainer, swimming, you know. Daddy took care of him.

WN: Was your dad a good swimmer?

LK: Well, I guess so. I mean, I guess he knew the fundamentals. How to take care yourself, what to do. And he laid the law down. I'm sure Brother Duke had to follow his (chuckles) advice.

WN: What about your mother?

LK: Oh, I remember her. Very sweet, you know. My mother was a Paoa--from the Paoa family. She had a pretty rough sled going, you know, with all of us. We were young and Daddy was. . . . Our house, you know, we had a little bit around the house--food, things like that.

And anyone came by, was always open house with her. I remember as I grew up, things that really stuck to my thinking. I remember Johnny Weissmuller and that bunch. And Norman Ross. They all became world champion swimmers with Brother Duke. So our house was more or less like a meeting house, I'm pretty sure, because we saw them all coming in there. You know, as we got a little older, we thought, Jesus--excuse me--but here, twelve of us kids, look at our mother. Small, little woman. (Laughs) But we never hurt her. She never scold us. I mean, probably with Sargent and I, we the young ones, maybe we're spoiled little bit. But I remember her, so sweet.

WN: There were twelve of you in the family?

LK: Twelve, yeah.

WN: Twelve kids?

LK: Well, there were nine, but three stillbirth. I know that there's nine that grew up.

WN: Out of the nine kids, what number were you?

LK: Number eight. Sargent--have you seen Sargent, yet? Have you talked to Sargent?

WN: Not yet.

LK: He's the last in the family.

WN: Was your mother's name . . .

LK: Julia.

WN: Julia Pa'akonia [Paoa Kahanamoku]?

LK: Pa'akonia.

WN: And so, there was Duke. . . .

LK: Duke, David, Bernice, Bill, Sam, then Kapi'olani . . .

WN: You and then Kapi'olani?

LK: No, Kapi'olani. And then Maria, and then me.

WN: Oh. And then, Sargent?

LK: And then Sargent.

WN: Oh, okay. So, you're number eight.

LK: Yeah. I'm number eight. Maria is number seven. Kapi'olani is six.

Sam is five. Bill is four. Wait awhile.

WN: Then Bernice, David . . .

LK: Oh, yeah. David, yeah. Bill is four. Bernice, then David, then Duke.

WN: What was your house like? First of all, where was the house?

LK: The house was right on Kālia Road. The whole district is Ala Moana, you know. But we always knew the area down there Kālia. Everything was Kālia. Now days, it's Ala Moana. So, we were right down. . . . Right here (LK examines map). What'd you ask me?

WN: Where is your house?

LK: Oh, yeah.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: So, like what is there now? Where your house was? Do you know?

LK: I think there's a business there [Budget Rent-a-Car]. Geez, I haven't been there so long. I know Duke leased it to these people. Brother Duke. That's his property. Now, it's in the hands of the wife, though. It was right next to. . . .

WN: You were next to the Harbottles?

LK: No, Simersons. I was between the Simerson and Sterling [families].

WN: And that house, was that owned by your father?

LK: That house? I got it all mixed up about this. You got to get it [i.e., the information] from my sister Bernice, you know.

WN: Oh, okay. Anyway, your house was in the Kālia area.

LK: Yeah, right here.

WN: Near the corner of Kālia and Ala Moana Beach Road?

LK: No, wait. The corner one was Paoa. [Next were the Sterlings.] We're [next]. Then the Simersons, then the Harbottles. Then there's a turn, Kapules. Going down to the ['Ilikai] Hotel today.

WN: Okay. When you were growing up . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: When you were growing up, you know, what kind of things did you do as a kid to have a good time?

LK: Number one, we all wanted to learn to swim. Number two, we wanted to learn to surf. Every kid that lived down that area. We played a little baseball. You know, we choose up [sides]. Get different districts. Kālia, you go out and played that bunch, the Stonewall Gang. And then we had another bunch go play the gang up in Kalihi. But us, we want to play the tough guys. Kalihi and Kaka'ako, guarantee going to be a fight, so we want to get in it.

(Laughter)

LK: Oh, I tell you. Yeah, 'cause those guys always fighting, you know. But I think we all had a good life, all us kids that lived down there. The whole batch of 'em. We'd go fishing together. You know, somebody say, "Hey, let's go tomorrow." Some go tonight. Go out, catch crabs at night. That's when we learn how to catch it with a coconut leaf.

WN: Oh, how did you do that?

LK: The coconut? You get the leaf. They got a long stem in the middle, see. Then you take 'em, you put a knot on it. And you just wait. Soon as the crab get around--they get some big black crabs--just pull over here, catch 'em on the leg. (Chuckles)

WN: Where did you catch crab?

LK: Right there at the beach. Because lot of us, we always get our food from right in front of that beach. We had the green limu, we had līpoa. You go down towards Royal Hawaiian Hotel, in that area. And different places, they get different kind of limu. Now, you don't get it. So the other day, the wife comes home. Say, "I got a surprise for you." So, I pick her up at the airport. All of a sudden, she got this stuff in the car and I smell the seaweed, I smell the limu, (chuckles) everything. Geez, I haven't had 'em for long time, you know. But she brought 'em. She just came back Thursday. Oh, we can't touch it. We got to wait until we get all the kids coming. Everybody going eat. Seaweed, all kind. We (chuckles) got 'em at my house, that little apartment. You got to keep me on line, now, when I . . .

WN: Besides crabbing, what else did you do? What kind fishing you did?

LK: Oh, with nets, we went fishing. Throw net right (from) the beach. And, you see, all those areas had different duck ponds. Most of us, we all waited for the doggone rain and the storm. When the storm came, they broke the (chuckles) chute, you know. Like these Chinese have a fish farm? They got to let the water in and out, see. Well, some of us would go up--I never did it, but somebody I know--they go up and they blame (chuckles) the rain, the flood. And here, all of us waiting down the beach. And that fish come down, ho, we scoop 'em.

WN: What had? Fish . . .

LK: All kind. Mullet was the main one. Mullet and 'o'opu. We call it 'o'opu, way back. That was good. Yeah. They was the two Hawaiian fishes. Especially 'o'opu was good. We had a lot of crabs down there, too, that we caught. When it's low tide, you got a lot of mud down there. Then we used to use a little cord with a good hook on the end. And we get the (coconut leaf), we tie the hook on like that and we stick 'em in the eel hole. Eel take a bite at 'em. That's how we caught our eel. You really got to know how. Never miss.

WN: You used to eat eel?

LK: Ho, yeah.

WN: How you eat 'em?

LK: There were different types. The pūhi-(paka) was the brown and white colored one. Then there was a white eel. Long white one. When we caught that, we put 'em in the charcoal, put on the fire. Maybe it's good for raw, but I never ate 'em (raw). But all our fish was good.

WN: How often did it storm?

LK: Well, gee, when's our rainy season? Around January? Around there? We had a lot of that during the holidays, you know. And when it rained down there, it flood. Everything's flood. You know, that's why they put in the Ala Wai Canal, the drainage canal, to have that drainage. Because everything came down from the mountain. You know, went over all that land. There's no stream [today in Waikīkī], no nothing. There's a few streams, like the one up in Mō'ili'ili. There's a small one there. It would come down through the mountain, then it would go into different ponds that you find along the way. Like the Willows? You know, the Willows [restaurant]? Over there. That was famous then, you know. They got a great big pond inside. All spring water, mountain. There's another one, couple of 'em, up ma uka, behind. Some Japanese family own that. I don't know what happened to it, whether they covered it up, put a house on top, I don't know. Because when I grew older, I worked for the government, and I had to go up and check all that property.

WN: Okay, and besides fishing, what else did you folks do?

LK: Well, then we played a lot of music. You know, ukulele. Kids all get a guitar, grab ukulele, play and sing. We entertain ourselves. There's no more radio. (Chuckles) Not in those days. We didn't know what it was. Friends, family. Across where the Paoas lived was the [Pi'ināi'o Stream]. Then in Hobron Lane there's another group of Hawaiians living there, [Joe] Ikeole, and all them. So, that's very close, all of us.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: What other activities did you folks have as kids?

LK: Well, we had a little track meet when the track meet season came around. We all had little teams, different teams, different events. We had the . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

LK: . . . which was good, like throwing the shot-put, and high jump, pole vaulting, and all that.

WN: Where did you do all this?

LK: We had an area down at the Mochizuki Hotel [i.e., Tea House], down there. Right alongside the Mochizuki Hotel, there was another [piece of land], the John 'Ena Estate. That's a big estate, the whole family had. We were given a little portion of land to use, more or less, for the kids. So, we had our track meet events when the time came around. We didn't have too much basketball, anything like that. I don't remember any. I remember baseball very much. Then swimming, naturally. We had water polo teams. You have all that.

WN: Tell me about the surfboard water polo. How did you play that game?

LK: Well, we had three up in front, center forward, back forward, three in back, and the goalie, seven. Seven men on the team. I think we even got a picture.

WN: How did you play it?

LK: The surfboard polo?

WN: Yeah.

LK: Well, instead of swimming [as in water polo], we use a surfboard. You know, the name of this game, you got to get your hands on the ball as soon as possible. So, what we did, most of us, we come in, cross each other, then knock the guy out of chasing the ball. One guy come through the (chuckles) middle, and knock 'em off.

WN: You can knock 'em off the board?

LK: Yeah. You got some of them guys, they lose their head. They just stay behind, they shove the board in your ribs, eh? But you can't do that, you know. Was a penalty. Every penalty, you don't play. You're out. (Chuckles) But, you know, kids.

WN: So, where did you put the ball?

LK: Carry that underneath your chin. And then, well, you wait. You keep paddling, you looking around. You just pass the ball. If you got two guys coming down for you in the opposing team, naturally, you not going to hold onto the ball. So, you look around, you

think this guy on the left is open. They think that, too, on your left. So, you go like this--psst. You throw the ball on the right. There's your open man, you know.

WN: How about the goalie? He was on a surfboard, too?

LK: Oh, yeah, yeah.

WN: And what? He used to sit on his board . . .

LK: Sit on the board, yeah.

WN: And everybody else used to lie?

LK: Lie down. But that was good fun. I don't know why that thing petered out. It came so strong. The game was played and they got so popular down there. And I guess there weren't too many places where they were surfing, you know. And the tourists would come. The tourists would watch the game. They would put up the prizes. They put up the food. We never cared for money. We were too stupid (chuckles) then. But to eat, hey, fill up the table.

(Laughter)

LK: And then, later on, we'd have prizes like a bathing suit. You know, those days, we all wear bathing suits. Then it got so that we did away with that. We only wear shorts. But you couldn't go on the beach, the old days, with just shorts. You couldn't do it. You had to wear full suits. And the girls would wear the long ones, right down below their knee. That was hell . . .

(Laughter)

LK: . . . when we think about it. Then, it started during my time, our time, when they did away with the long, girl's swimming suits. Just like pantaloons, you know, long here. 'Cause we had a lot of good girl swimmers that made the Olympic games, you know, and they were wearing that. And later on, they had one-piece suit. Mari Wehselau, Helen Moses, and Josephine Hopkins. These girls were all fantastic swimmers. I think two of them made the Olympic games. Yeah, Helen Moses and Mari Wehselau.

Now, I don't know what, Warren, about the other games we had. I think we had every game. Whatever there was, we got involved somehow.

WN: Before Duke went to the Olympics, did you folks ever think that one of you would ever become an Olympic champion. I mean, you know, what were you folks thinking in those early days?

LK: All of my brothers, they all wanted to shoot for the Olympic games. But with David and I, I always wanted to play in all kinds of sports. I went into track, I went to football. You know, from Punahou School, I went right up to Town Team, and we had a big semi-pro

team with University of Hawai'i. And then, we played the big colleges, big pro teams from the Green Bay Packers, that kind of bunch, Baltimore Colts. They all came. But I was in that league, you know. Most of my friends all went into those kind of sports.

And I think, let's see, there was track meet before. Track came around the end of the year. And it got so that everybody had to go and run, you see. And me, I was in Punahou School, they tell me, "You going to play football?"

I say, "Yeah."

"You got to sign up for track team."

And I didn't want to turn out. I want to throw shot-put, that's good enough. Make first place. But I had to go and run. But when they describe to you why you need to run, you got to strengthen your legs, your arms, the whole thing. It's so important, track, you know. Every kid that plays sports should go--today, right up to the present--should be in the track. But then, if you go in different sports like swimming, then you can't go in track. You're developing different kinds of muscles. The swimmers, you have the long, smooth muscles. The track, whatever, you got all that strong and chunky muscles, where you're apt to get cramps if you swimming with that kind of muscles. You play water polo with that kind of muscles, you're going down, you know. These kids [i.e., canoe paddlers], they all come down. They go in practice. They got to run. They got to run from here. They run way up the hill, down across here, and back. (Chuckles) [Then] everybody paddle the canoe.

WN: Duke was mostly swimming?

LK: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, with Daddy, Duke had to stay swimming, that's all. What the heck? Look where he went, you know. My daddy was right, too. Sargent stayed with swimming. Sargent made good. But you know, Sargent got married too early. Shee, Sargent would have been right up with Brother Duke because he was fast, too. Then the one that really was right behind the Duke was Sam. Sam was an Olympic swimmer, too. Sam went over. Well, it was Brother Duke's third Olympic games, I think, when Sam and. . . . We had two brothers here living in Honolulu. The Kealoha brothers. They weren't brothers, they're cousins. One was Warren and the other was Pua. Warren became the world's champion backstroke swimmer. He made the [1920 and 1924] Olympic games. And the freestyle swimmers who made the Olympic games was Duke, Sam, and Pua Kealoha. Pua was a good swimmer. Gee, he was fast.

Duke went over, 1912 meet. Then the war [World War I] broke out [which cancelled the 1916 games]. And he was in Red Cross work. He was going all over. Then, 1920, was the next. War was over '18. And Olympic games came back. And he went into 1920, his second, and his third Olympic games was '24. Then in '28 and '32, I think, he just went in for water polo. Duke made it. 'Cause a lot of the

old-timers up there, Mainland, all over the country, "Come on, Duke." But, you know, he was getting on in years. He tried to swim the sprint. But he had a world's record for all those events for a long time.

WN: Tell me something about your education. What schools did you go to?

LK: Well, I started in a grammar school out at Waikīkī. This was the Waikīkī School. God, we were right across the street [site of the present Princess Ka'iulani Hotel] from the Moana Hotel. (Chuckles)

WN: That's where Waikīkī School was?

LK: Yeah.

WN: What did it look like?

LK: Just a couple of buildings in there. Yeah, that's all, you know. And all us kids come from way down Kālia, we had to come to school there. That's the only school we had. And then, we moved from there up to near the Kapi'olani Park. Waikīkī School, they moved the area. They built up, see. And the [Moana] Hotel utilized that [old] area [for employee cottages].

And after that, I went to St. Louis School for my high school. St. Louis School was down at the old River Street. They call us the River Street Gang, you know. We had some brothers, (teachers), at school, those days. Oh, man, they were tough, shee. I was a sophomore then. We had a couple of hardheaded guys, you know, named Bill Welsh, Harry Nobriga--the bull of Pālama.

WN: Harry Nobriga was the bull of Pālama?

LK: Yeah, the bull of Pālama, that time. Harry Nobriga.

Try bring me back. I keep going ahead too much. I forget, you know. You see, a lot of things, now--my age, I guess. Lot of times, like my wife, she say I forget a lot of things. And I do. I talk, then I'm off to something else.

WN: You were talking about St. Louis.

LK: Oh, St. Louis, yeah. I was going to school. We had good brothers, and, boy, you had to study those days. You know, we had big boys around there. I was in my sophomore year, then I had a chance to go to Punahou School. But I never told anybody. Brother David was a Pālama Gang boy when he was young. Then he went to school, Dayton University, whatever. Then he graduated brotherhood. He taught at the school. Then there's Brother Gilbert, that great big tall son-of-a-gun. And we had a Jewish brother in there. We called him Brother Matthew. That's the guy controlled me. Small little guy. But then, I left St. Louis to go to Punahou. You know, all this stuff, going different school, Warren, I did it on my own. I never asked anybody.

But I needed money. I know where to go, take a chance. I was never turned down. We'd make extra money going down the beach to help the older guys with the canoe or go carry surfboard when the tourist through with the board. And we make a couple of dollars. We made fifty cents a day. You know, that big money, eh? And that was school money for me.

WN: So, you earned the money yourself, then, to go to Punahou?

LK: Yeah. See, all those boys down the beach. Had a little book there. And you come in. And we had a regular Hawaiian bookkeeper beach boy. "How much today?"

"Oh, one dollar, two dollar."

Oh, that's big money, boy, you know.

WN: How you folks exactly made money as a beach boy?

LK: Well, as I grew little bit older, I made money by teaching surfing. All the boys liked to go surfing because then the wahines, you go stand up, where you put their legs between your arms in the pits, you know. But I was thinking of making money. I was talking to couple of guys, Peter Makia and one more. I say, "Hey, we go give swimming lesson."

"What?"

"Swimming lesson. Lot of these Haoles, they don't know how to swim."

So we start giving swimming lessons, and oh, well, that was a good moneymaker, those days, you know. Everybody had to swim.

I [went to] grammar school, Ka'ahumanu School [after Waikīkī School]. [Then] I went to St. Louis. I wanted to go to Kamehameha School, so I went up to Kamehameha School. I took the streetcar and I went up early in the morning. Nobody recommended me. Just I went in there. There was a Mr. Nelson, he was principal then. Told him I wanted to come to school. Who was going to pay for you? I said I want to live in there, dormitory style. Right where the Bishop Museum is now. Right across from the big building, the main office. He told me I couldn't get in the school, Kamehameha School. He kept me there for about, oh, couple hours in the morning. So, oh, heck.

So, I caught the streetcar. I came down to Pāwa'a Junction. And they have a streetcar at that Pāwa'a Junction that turns around and it goes up to Punahou School, goes down Pensacola, and it goes up to Beretania, and they get in town someplace, and it comes back again. They make that route. Where Pawa'a Junction is, just down the road from there, about little less than a mile, there's a Pāwa'a [now Cinerama] Theater. That's a popular place, too. When I came down from Kamehameha School, I stopped at Pāwa'a Junction. I got a

transfer. I went to Punahou School, see if I can get into Punahou. So, I was pretty big boy, then. I was about 190, 200 pounds, 210, eh? So, the principal, Mr. Aitken, and Arthur Hauck was the president of the school. Everybody up there told me, "You want to go there, go to see the president." He likes sports, you know. So, I go see him. And he tell me, "You play football?"

I said, "Yeah, I play football."

The next one to see was Aitken, the principal of the school. So, that's how I got in Punahou.

WN: Why did you want to go to Punahou?

LK: I thought it would be better for me to go to Punahou at that time 'cause Punahou was well known. If I had the money and decide to go to college, I figure, I'm going to make it. And Punahou was it. You see, they have big guys, big families there. All the missionaries families, all the kids went to Punahou School. They had pictures hanging around there of some of the colleges back then, and that's why I think I could get help, you see. And I hit it right on the head. Somebody at the time asked me the same question, "Why you want to go Punahou?"

I said, "Punahou had plenty girls up there."

(Laughter)

LK: First I go in there, all the guys sitting outside of the main office, Punahou campus. All football players. They sit around, and so I came over there. So, I walk this way, see this little girl going by. "Hey, who belongs to that?"

"Nobody." Hey, okay. (Chuckles) That's why, I was crazy. We were crazy up there.

WN: And after Punahou, where did you go?

LK: Warren, my second year at Punahou, I was in my junior year. I was Downtown on a weekend, and I ran into Johnny Noble. I don't know whether you heard the name Johnny Noble. He was a great musician . . .

WN: Musician. Oh, yeah.

LK: And this is down at the Empire Theater. That's right on Bethel and Hotel. So, I was on the side when he stopped me. He said, "Hey, boy, how you?"

"Fine, Mr. Noble."

"You can get some boys play music?"

"Sure, I get boys play music." You know. I said, "Where we going play? Some hotel or some party?"

"No, no. You can get about five boys?"

First he said three. "Ah, three, waste time, no more music." That's what (chuckles) I told him.

He told me, "How do you know?"

I said, "You get two ukulele, one guitar. That's not music."

He say, "Yeah."

Because I had one guy, knows how to play violin down the beach, Waikīkī, Peter Makia. I said, "I need five. I go hustle." I went right out to Waikīkī Beach. And I said, "Mr. Noble, where we going play? That afternoon, I call him at the Moana Hotel. That's where he rehearse. I said, "I got the boys. Five of us."

"All right, you get ready, now. You guys get your clothes, get everything. You going leave Monday. You going Japan."

I said, "What?"

(Laughter)

LK: You ought to see me. I go crazy. You know, young kid. Going Japan. So, [before] I left, I went to the school. I went to Punahou. Again, I went to see Mr. Hauck. He gave me a briefcase. "Now here's your books. You promise me you put in at least half an hour, an hour a day if you can. You going for nine days trip"--ten days, or something like that--"and be sure you study. And when you come back, you come up here and brush up. After one week home, you take the test."

Fine. So, I go Japan. I had a good time. I come back. Then my sister grabbed me. See, my brother Duke wasn't living with us. He was on the Mainland, and David was away. Just my sister Bernice. But somehow, we never fight, we never argued. My sister said, "You cannot do this."

"Okay, okay, okay." One ear, go out the other ear. Rather than stick around, it's not going to help. So us kids, we just walk off. "Yeah, yeah. Okay, okay."

WN: What did your mother say about it? What about your mother?

LK: Oh, my mother was such a queen. She would never hurt us boys. She just shook her head when I told her. I said, "Mama, I'm going San Francisco."

"You going San Francisco? You take care yourself. Be a good boy." That's all. She was so. . . . It's a great loss, boy. She was good woman.

So, I go down, I get these guys, and we go down on this trip. So, I come back. One week before Labor Day or the day after Labor Day,

start of school. We were going to have a good football team, Punahou School. The year before that, I played.

So, I go on another trip. Somebody calls me up in the morning and say, "When we going?"

"Stop, pau. I got to go back school."

"Nah, this trip start Wednesday."

Going on the Matsonia from here to San Francisco, back, two weeks' trip. Boy. I never told my mother. I never tell my brother nothing. That time, school, they come in the afternoon. "Where's Louis? Louis not coming down?" The guys from the school. Henry Hughes, all them guys went down the beach, you know, look for me. Then they find me on the surfboard. I came in.

"Oh, I going away on the boat. I going play music on the boat. I going San Francisco." I never went to Punahou after that. I was gone. (Laughs) And that's the extent of my education.

So, I told Mr. Hauck, I said, "You know, when I'm done, I'm going to the School of Hard Knocks." Lot of these guys (chuckles) don't know what that school is, but that's the school I'm going to--School of Hard Knocks. I was a punk kid. I tell you, the old man, chee, I never forget him. When he passed away on the Mainland, I got call from the wife. I was very close to him. All us kids were, you know.

WN: You played on the boat, the Matson boat?

LK: Matson boat.

WN: And Japan, where did you folks play?

LK: We played on the Korea Maru going down, and we came back on the Taiyō Maru.

WN: Oh, but you never played in Japan or in San Francisco?

LK: No, we had no time for that. We got better things. You know, like us boys, five of us, just like we so damn hungry, you know. Instead of go make the rounds of all these wahine--different place, no, the first one we hit, bang, we go in there, stop. We come in there, bring our guitar, you know, the Japanese girls, they close the house. Music. (Laughs) For one week, we used to live there, play music over there.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: How much did you folks get paid?

LK: Well, it was lousy. I don't know, maybe. . . . Chee. I doubt we made a hundred dollars a trip, each. I have no idea. I forgot.

WN: Who were the five?

LK: One who played on a Hawaiian band. What's his name? Lima? Yeah. He played steel [guitar]. I played the guitar. Peter Makia played the ukulele. Who's the other two? Oh, man. One played the violin. Who the hell was he?

WN: You played Hawaiian music?

LK: Played Hawaiian music.

WN: With violin?

LK: Well, you know, Warren, the violin took the place of a steel guitar. The violin was it. It was number one Hawaiian instrument. When my dad traveled, long, I guess, before we were born, he took a group himself. He went all through Europe, my dad. And by God, my uncle stayed there. He never came back. He's passed away now. This was his brother. But he made my daddy come home because there was all (us) kids (at home). We hadn't been born yet. There was Duke, David, and he got to come back. So, Daddy came home, you know. But, chee, when I look back, I think about something like this.

WN: How did you learn how to play music?

LK: I learned music by ear. All of us learned music by ear. And then, later on, as time goes on, then we learn notes. But what they do is grab you. We go to a place, big dance, like the Moana Hotel. We all listen, you know, our bunch. Before we go home, we go back to the Moana Pier. They had a pier out there. We bring our guitar, ukulele. That's the way we played. All by ear, eh? Notes came later. But we would play for different people along Kālia Road in the back of where the Halekūlani Hotel was. The back entrance to the Royal Hawaiian. All in there was the Brown Estate. The Brown Family. Halekūlani and House Without A Key. You know, there's a big history there.

WN: House Without A Key?

LK: House Without A Key [on the Halekūlani Hotel grounds.]

WN: What is that?

LK: Chee, I don't know. I think was Don Blanding [Earl Derr Biggers]. It is a beautiful story. You know, if you get chance, go over to the museum, go find that book. That book is really something.

WN: What book?

LK: It's a storybook. Story about the House Without A Key right in Waikīkī. But that's the way the people lived down there, Warren. Nobody locked their house until these (tourists) coming in. Then the kanakas learned how to steal. (Chuckles) They took over. But that's what's the name of that house. And that was just like all over around the Islands, you know. Nobody locked the house. That's the way I was, my home, we children. Was beautiful then, those days.

WN: When did you start hanging around the beach? How old?

LK: Well, you know, Brother Duke didn't live with us kids when we were young. He lived in Hollywood, you know, for a long time. So, when I was a kid, I always wanted to surf in Waikīkī. We had a place where we surfed down Kālia. Right now, there's a big area in Kālia now, right outside the channel. That's where we used to surf when we were kids. From there, [heading towards Diamond Head], they go to Popular Surf. Then [after] Popular Surf, was Canoe Surf. Canoe Surf was the number one. You regular beach boy, you get up in that area. And then, the one after that was Queen's Surf because the queen lived in that area. And then after that, then became Cunha because the Cunha family owned lot of that land by the [Kapi'olani] Park. So, the big surf there was known as Cunha Surf.

And beyond that point, now its the Elks Club, was the Castles's home. So, that surf was called the Castle Surf. And my God, when they put that building up there, ho, the tall, that building. That's where the big surf were, see. And with Cunha and Queen's Surf, the waves don't come up unless it's real heavy waves. Big strong, then the waves come up in these different areas. But everyday surfing is Canoe Surf by the Moana Hotel straight out. About three or four areas now.

WN: So, you got to start from the bottom, and as you get older, you work your way up?

LK: Oh, yeah. When we small, we couldn't go out to Moana Hotel surf. I remember the first time I went out on the big surf, I had to get out right after school. Take off out there. Four o'clock, half past three, one of the boys on the beach, our gang, waves the flag. You got to come in before Duke and them come back from work. When they come from work, all these guys, they own the beach, boy. All the kids, the young guys, out of the ocean. Just like that. These guys with their big board, they just stand, they look around. So we respect that, you know, us kids. That's how we got along. Fine, you know.

WN: So, the big surf was by Moana Hotel . . .

LK: Yeah, straight out . . .

WN: Where the big guys went?

LK: Yeah. See, by Moana, there's always big surf. Then, from Moana, you looking this way, Moana, to the right, way out there, they call the surf "Popular Surf." That was a big one. So, there's a Moana, and then there's a Popular. Then you go to the left, then it's Queen's, then it's Cunha, then there's Castle, which is Elks Club now. All that. Then you get way down here by the Popular Surf, then there's a big opening there past Halekūlani. You get right down there near the Kālia area by Fort DeRussy. There's another big waves out there. They call it the "Helga."

WN: Helga?

LK: Yeah. H-E-L-G-A.

WN: Oh, that's named after the boat?

LK: The boat that wrecked over there.

WN: Shipwrecked boat?

LK: Shipwrecked, the Helga, yeah. That's why it's called "Helga." And you know, when we old enough we find where the heck that ship was. So, we kids, we go out with the boat, canoe, and surf. We go out dive over there, go by the ship. The wreck is all down the bottom. Well, it's gone now. I don't know where the heck it is. So many (chuckles) years now.

WN: So, as a little kid, where did you folks surf?

LK: Oh, we surfed down at Kālia, outside there, you know. But we couldn't get in Waikīkī, shee. Actually, when we grew older, we had the same thing. We were the boss then. Yeah. The guys from Stonewall come down, "You ain't coming down this end, stay up there." (Laughs) Otherwise, fight, boy.

WN: You had rivalry with Stonewall Gang?

LK: Oh, yeah. But, see, it started long ago during Duke and those guys's time. With Duke and Buck Kahele--that's another guy, Buck Kahele is a cousin of mine--and George Keaweamahi, "Tough Bill." All those guys were, shee, big Hawaiians. They were broad as they were tall. That big, you know. I don't know where some old pictures we had. God, man. I always told my kid brother, I said, "Ey, we gotta save this picture. Maybe you can hold onto this for another fifty years, then you compare, you know." I got married. I moved here, I moved there. I gave away my pictures. Now, I'm trying to go look for it (chuckles). The wife's helping me out 'cause I got grandchildren now. I just want to pass it along, you know.

WN: So, who else besides "Tough Bill" and Duke were some of the older beach boys?

LK: There was "Audie" Holstein. A-U-D-I-E Holstein. They lived up there by the Stonewall. They're the old beach boys. And "Audie" Holstein (had) a beautiful voice, Hawaiian, can sing. Then we had another, was a cousin of mine. Robert "Bob" Ka'awa. He's the one that traveled. Went away, and then some tourist grab him. That's the one who can sing, oh. They had lot of big Hawaiians down there, those days. They all huge. Old Man John D. Kaupiko. The son is still around.

WN: What about "Dudi" Miller?

LK: Yeah, "Dudi" Miller. "Dudi," he was the law, boy. On the beach, shee, long before my time. As we grew up, the kids, was always "Dudi." But he was such a nice. . . . You know, he was strict but good. So, he never raise hell with us. But we know when we saw him, he was like just walking down the beach, "Hey, here comes the boss." That's it. You respect, that's all. Don't raise hell. Anything wrong with the tourists, well, let the guys in the office take care. But, you know, those days, especially the Haole wahines, they all went for the beach boys. I tell you, oh, man.

WN: So, what did you have to do to become a beach boy?

LK: You get to know some of the guys down there. You know, meet couple of guys, and they like you and they bring you around, introduce to the boys. Then the older guys would question, "Who's that kid?"

"Oh, that's so-and-so."

"Well, you guys tell him what goes on over here."

Make one mistake, (chuckles) you're out. That was all, boy. Don't come around there anymore. So, we kept it nice. I can remember there was never any thieving going on or robbery going on as far as around the hotel during my time, the Moana or the Outrigger, the old Seaside Hotel. People never lost anything. Nobody went inside, that's why. Later on, oh, as we moved away, I got older, I hear all kind of story. A guy go up there [to a hotel room], he want to take the money, take the purse. But you never find that those days, never. As far as I can remember, I don't know of any incident that we were called down 'cause somebody lost their money. No way.

WN: You folks were Hui Nalu, huh?

LK: Yeah.

WN: How did that organization get started?

LK: Well, Hui Nalu was "Dudi" Miller, Mr. Rawlins--Judge Rawlins. I'm trying to think of the older guys, music guys. Like Joe Bishaw, all these other guys, they just fell in [as] beach boys, then they played music, they travelled a lot, became well known. They were very well liked by a lot of people that came to Hawai'i. I said my

brother Sam was down at the beach, and then Mrs. Clark (from Montana) took a liking to Brother Sam. So, she sponsored Sam to go to college back in the Mainland. So, Sam went back to Andover, Massachusetts, you see. Andover, Massachusetts is a preparatory school for Harvard.

Fred Paoa, he went, too. He didn't go to Andover, but he went to Harvard. And Fred was in school, I think his second year or last year, then Brother Sam went up. But I do remember the whole upshot of the whole thing, Sam went up there and I don't know what happened after that. I don't know, he never finished school. He came home. But you know, I want to raise hell with him. Mother told us, "Don't you. It's none of your business." My dad was gone already. Mother never scold us. "That's what happened. Pau, you take your medicine. Don't talk about anybody." That was it. That's the way we were then. That's the way we were brought up.

But Sam had all the good breaks, though, my brother. He was well liked. He plays music. He can play any kind of song. You give him an instrument he's never seen before, he take it. He sit over there until he can play that damn thing. Might take him half an hour, take him two hours. He's a professional. Any kind of instrument. Horn, saxophone, anything. He was good.

WN: So, I asked you earlier, how did you folks get paid as beach boys? How did that work?

LK: Before, we just go out, collect the money, bring 'em inside the desk. And [similar to] the husband or wife, you take care when you pay. Ah, put down two dollars mine and dollar go for the house. You know, that kind of deal. Then, later on, we had forms cut out where the people don't carry their money. So, we say, "Hey, we not going to wait." Some of the tourists, we gotta go down the boat to get our money, you know. Catch 'em before they leave or (chuckles) we throw 'em off the ship. You darned right, boy. But I only had. . . . I think one or two instance [when LK had difficulty collecting]. Every time the boat left, us boys would go down the ship. And we'd buy leis for them. Was thirty-five cents a lei or fifty cents. But we just buy 'em. We come out with arms full of leis, and we put 'em on the tourists that hang around the hotel beaches. We come out of there, twenty, thirty, forty bucks by the time we got out, put (chuckles) leis on.

WN: Why? They tip you?

LK: They tip us, you know. "Here, you boys," you know. They give us money. Well, we said, "Nah, nah," but we take.

WN: What if when they come in? You go down, too?

LK: We go down when they come in, you know. But what some of us will really do at that time, Warren, is we go down and we size up the girls that come in. You look, "Ey, that one up there, the one with the blue dress, that's mine, okay?" That's it. No fight, no nothing.

And we know they going be on the beach, we know they going stay in the hotel. We meet 'em, that's ours. That's mine, you know. And that's where all the boys were, Waikiki.

Heck, I had one wahine there that I didn't want to marry. 'Cause I'd rather stay single and play the field. But you know that that girl went to see my mother, and oh, boy, that's when I just cut her off. Then she went with one of the Hawaiian boys in Honolulu. She's still living today. She is eighty-something, I think, just about.

WN: She was a tourist?

LK: Yeah. But she lives here now. This is after that. She never went away. She stayed here. Then she met this boy that worked in the courts with me. He tell me, "Hey, you quit the wahine?"

I say, "Yeah, I quit."

He married the wahine. They still married. I think he's. . . . I don't know what happened. I think Joe is still around.

You know, when I came up here [i.e., Kona], Warren, I left Honolulu with so many friends, you know. It's in the hundreds.

WN: When did you come up here?

LK: Ho, I came up here in (1965). Pretty close to (twenty) years. But holy smokes, that was a long time. What was I talking about. I'm getting ahead of you . . .

WN: Oh, we were talking about the women. You know, the beach boys . . .

LK: Oh, that kind. Okay, yeah, yeah. Well, that, you know, waste time. But never miss, you know.

WN: What do you think they saw in you folks? I mean, you know, as beach boys, did you folks know you had this kind of magnetism for Haole women . . .

LK: I think so. You know, if you think about it, you look. You see a bunch of brown clad boys, Hawaiian boys. And we were clean-cut. We never had long hairs, all that kind, no way. You gotta shave (your face before) you come down the beach. We wear nice suits and everything. In the evening, we're different guys, boy. We dress nice, clean, you know. Not fancy clothes. Sometime, unless we have to go to a big dance or some people in the hotel gave a big party, then we go with coat and tie. And they look at us (chuckles) when we walk in, oh, with a tie. Some of the guys get really dressed.

'Cause who pushed the whole deal throughout all the country with his aloha shirt with long sleeve, is Brother Duke. He never gone around with a coat. He had a little. . . . What do you call it? Not a

tie, just a necklace like, you know. That's all he wore over his aloha shirt. There was a big story about him when he was inducted in the Shriners for the year throughout the whole country. And here he was, Duke Kahanamoku, (chuckles) with his shirt. But that's the way he was all the time.

WN: So, in your case, what? You were a beach boy mainly because of what? Was it the money or was it the women or. . . . You know, what was it mostly?

LK: Well, I think, what I really liked about our life is that it was clean to me, you know. Naturally, we had access to all the people that came here more than anybody else. You take boys for boys in different areas, nobody touch those guys down Waikīkī. We saw the fresh people that came in, we saw the new people that came in. We saw the rich people. You know, it didn't faze us a bit 'cause the guy got lot of money. Because everybody, we figured, had money those days, you know. Everything was cheap. What was that now?

WN: So, was it money or the women?

LK: I think it was money. Women was women. We know we going get 'em. It got so, before, we hungry, but after that, we thought, "Hey, wait awhile. We got to make some money." (Chuckles) That's [i.e., women] easy, no worry about that. That's secondary. So we go out and think of making money. I saved a little bit money, you know, kind of rich. If I knew at that time [when] I met a lot of people, can you imagine way back then? Give me some of that with that kind of money and they could probably sell [me] some small piece of land around Waikīkī, right in the middle of Waikīkī.

When I moved up here, right across from the Gump's Store. Was right on Lewers Road and Kalākaua Avenue. Right across there. When somebody told me that that piece of property is $250 a square foot, I like to (chuckles) die. I said, "What? Jesus Christ." And my uncle had a big piece of property right behind the Royal Hawaiian. Pi'ikoi. Mrs. Pi'ikoi, that one. She got a nice chunk there right near the hotel. But then I remember the Ka'akua family up here by the fish ponds, you know. They had nice big properties around there. But to think how the damn land was sold, ho, man.

WN: So, as a beach boy, what did you do? Give 'em surfing lessons, swimming lessons, what else?

LK: We give surfboard lessons, swimming lessons, massage lessons. Oh, we were giving massage, then, all us boys. We go on the surfboard, this one coming in, and get towel, wipe 'em up. Just give 'em massage right there on the beach. We move in the room. They said it was too public, you know. What the hell, there's nothing wrong.

WN: So, you folks played music, too, for the tourists, huh?

LK: We played music. Music parties. We always play for the tourists.

We charged a dollar a head to go surfing on the canoe. That's six people. Gotta go with six. If you only come with five, you pay for six. You only got four, you pay for six. So, then, I think a dollar a head. No, dollar half, a head. That's six, seven eight dollars, no? Yeah, anyway, they split with the house.

WN: What about tips? Did you get tips, too?

LK: Oh, yeah.

WN: You had to split tips, too?

LK: Oh, if there's canoe, you split 'em. If on a surfboard, it's yours. But, you know, Warren, you don't even think of five bucks or couple of bucks those days. We know we got ten dollars already in our hands when they tip you. Shee, start from ten and up. You know, they get so they just pull [the money out] like this. (Chuckles) And you think, you look at them, you say, "Holy Sue, the guy get plenty money." (Laughs)

WN: You think, with all that money they had, was there competition between the beach boys? You know, was there people coming in from the outside trying to horn in on the business?

LK: Oh, yeah. We had boys, beach boys, from different areas, you know, so-called. See, we had nobody down Halekūlani Hotel, nobody around us. That's our whole area. And the only [other] bunch that we had, that Stonewall Gang, we call 'em. That's up there where Chris Holmes's home was. But they don't get the canoe surfing. The waves up there bad for surfing, you see, for surfboard. We taught people, we taught them how to swim. We had swimming lessons, we had surfing lessons, and so we made quite a bit of money that way, you know. Big money.

WN: So, the Stonewall Gang was the other side, eh? More towards . . .

LK: Stonewall was up there by. . . . See, the last big home on the strip, Kalākaua Avenue, was Prince Kūhiō's home. He was our first delegate [to Congress]. Just beyond there was the beginning of the Stonewall. And that Stonewall ran right up into the Kapi'olani Park, you see. That's why, we call that the Stonewall Gang.

WN: But there weren't too many hotels around there, eh?

LK: No.

WN: So, you folks were down by Moana [Hotel] side?

LK: Yeah.

WN: Did you get more of the tourists . . .

LK: Oh, we had the prime. Yeah. That was the prime area. Because the

Moana was the big hotel. Then, 1927, they built the Royal Hawaiian. So, you had two. But where the Royal Hawaiian is today, there was a hotel there called the Seaside Hotel. It was a big. . . . It's an old. . . . You know, for many years, but, gee, how the architect got it. He had the hotel sticking out in the ocean. You know, on pillars, eh? Big pipes? One, two, three, four, and the dining room was there. Then the bedrooms was upstairs, and all over. That was the Seaside Hotel. Then they had some rooms up in back where the Royal Hawaiian Hotel is. They had some of that property, too. And across the hotel from the Moana. But there was only that hotel and the Halekūlani. That's all the hotels down there. And Seaside.

WN: And you guys were down nearer to the hotels.

LK: Right in the middle.

WN: So, who went down to go by the Stonewall Gang? What tourists?

LK: Tourists don't go down there.

WN: They don't go down there?

LK: They don't go.

WN: So, those guys didn't make that much money, then?

LK: No. They cockroach 'em when they see 'em out by Queen's Surf. They go out there with their own board and hustle, eh? But we sized the boys up, you know, because they came from all over town. And we would bring some of these boys in from the Stonewall. "Ey, this going be good guy, good kid. Bring 'em in." And Duke was the kingpin from way back. That's how, he said, we can help. Bring him in. But nobody cockroach. (Chuckles) Nobody stealing. So, it was good. And those days, you know, Warren, we thought, everybody say, "Ey, you a beach boy." You know, it was like kind of scum of the earth. And it was bad. But most of us thought--well, someday a lot of people, they want to know they from the beach, the beach boy. Someday, they going to be some big man down there. Look what happened. They get a rock band, they call 'em Beach Boys, they got everything. They all big, even till today. I never forget. I tell my wife, "Yeah, we always said down there [being a] beach boy was an honor."

WN: How are beach boys---how are they different today from when you guys were beach boys? What's the difference now days?

LK: Well, I have a niece who was married to one of the boys that was on the beach during my time. They've been divorced now, but he runs the whole business down the beach, now. From the Outrigger Hotel, the Moana, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, all that hotels. So, he has the canoes, he has the surfboard service. Well, there're lot of rental surfboard areas around the beach now, but Harry is one of the biggest. He is

the biggest over there. So, he's got that whole area, and they make good money. I don't know what kind tips they get now, but couple of times, years ago, maybe about five, ten years ago, I asked Harry, "How you doing on the beach?"

"Not like the old days. No more the tips." (Chuckles) He say when they give you tip, you see all the muscles in the finger.

(Laughter)

LK: I say, "What?"

"Muscle, you know, hold onto the money."

(Laughter)

LK: Muscle in the thumb, like that, eh?

WN: I guess tourists are different, huh, now?

LK: Oh, yeah, sure. Oh, yeah. Gotta be. Different life.

WN: I guess the tourists in those days had more money maybe, huh?

LK: They did. I think they did. They had more allowances for go to school.

WN: Whatever became of your father's property?

LK: Daddy's parcel was turned over to the. . . . We had a portion of where the Sterlings have that property. You see, there's two pieces right there. That was divided to Helen Paoa or Dr. George [Paoa]. And then, we had the rest. Then Brother Duke had it. See, I'm the only one now with Sargent and Brother Bill, and Sister Bernice. That's all that's left of the family, and the kids, you know. [Duke's wife] still has the property, but the building, she's never put any improvement on it, you know. I tried to get some correspondence going with her. You know, they ignore. They say, "Ah, he's gone already." It would come down to whoever was surviving and then on, and on, and on. I told Brother Duke and Sam, I say, "We never sell that property. Don't sell 'em." Because at that time, chee, I like real estate. I sold lot of real estate. I never sold our place there. Duke's wife still has it. For her life, see. Was supposed be for her life. Geez, going over twenty years now since Duke died. Duke died in 1968.

WN: What were some of the jobs you had, besides beach boy and playing [music] on the ships?

LK: I was in school, and I knew a Mrs. Spitz, Hawaiian woman. She was chairman of the present O'ahu Prison. So, I worked at that time in the circuit court in Honolulu. I was a bailiff down there. But I wanted to get in a job in the prison. So then Brother Duke and

Lang Akana put me down at the county jail. I became deputy jailer. I knew I was good in handwriting type work, you know. So, there was an opening. I went right in as a deputy jailer. Most of my work, it's always been around legal work. Like around the courts, around the jail. From the county prison, I went up to O'ahu Prison. I was a guard down there. I had a chance to transfer back to the county, you know. But I didn't get the job I want, so I had a call from Herman Clark. Herman is one of our famous athletes in the Paoa family and all that. Herman and I played . . .

(LK greets someone. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

LK: Herman and I played football a long time. So there was an opening in the U.S. marshal's office. So, Herman tells them, "I got the right man." (Laughs) So he called me up. He came. "Louis, I pick you up."

I said, "You come in the morning." I was living with Mother. So Herman came down.

And then, he say, "You going be deputy U.S. marshal."

I say, "What?"

"Yeah, you going be."

This was during Prohibition time. I went up, met the old man, Oscar P. Cox. Oscar was a. . . . Pure Haole but Hawaiian, you know. Been down around Hale'iwa, Waialua area. Big family. So, I got into the marshal's work. But that was interesting work, though.

WN: What'd you do?

LK: Well, number one, we took care of all the processed legal work and everything that going through the courts, federal courts. Then we also was in charge of all foreigners coming into the country for contraband, things like that. Then . . .

(Traffic noise. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

LK: Then it was bootlegging time, too. The police go out, and the regular Prohibition agents is another unit. They would go out and do the buying, they do everything. And then, we'd come in. They got the wine. We'd come in for the arrest, see. So, I get my squad, two, three of us guys. I need help, boom, I call so-and-so, police come in. So, then we'd go out and we raid these places. Chee, we were raiding the hotels, we raiding all over.

One of my biggest deals I had was. . . . When we work at night, we take off in the morning. You come to work, you know, eight o'clock or eight-thirty, take the [following] day off, 'cause we had worked the night before. And my Aunt Pi'ikoi, she lived on Kālia Road. It's right about two blocks from the back entrance to the Royal Hawaiian

Hotel. My other cousin, Mrs. King, was right there. Her room was right on the corner there. Right on the strip there, and then she goes into the hotel property. So, I got tipped the Shriners were having a big party [at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel]. So when we hear that, we [thought] this [was really a] big [party]. Before, [the big hotel] was the Moana; now this Royal Hawaiian [was the biggest]. So, I go home one day. You know, half a day off, I go home. Then, I went my aunt's. See, we live way down by Kālia, but my aunt lives right outside the Royal Hawaiian. So, I used to go in there and change to go swimming. And then I see this big American Laundry truck, two of them. One after another. They go in the back of the Royal Hawaiian. I look, I said, "How the hell going be two trucks coming in one time?" So, I stuck around. The first one I saw went in there. The clothes went in. And the second one, ho. So, I call Herman Clark down the office. I told him what I spotted, and I think we ought to come up.

So, he said, "Wait." So, he talks to the big boss, old man. United States Marshal Cox. So, the old man talks to Herman on the phone, and I'm still on the other end. And then, Herman comes back. He says, "Hey, the old man said what you saw? A truck? Plenty bottles?"

"Yeah."

He said, "Well, keep going. Forget about it."

(Laughter)

LK: Oh, I was mad like hell, you know. But that was the good old days.

WN: Oh, so nothing happened, then?

LK: We couldn't. He said, "Forget about it. Don't go make arrest." That was for all the Shriners. The Shriners were having their party, a get-together at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. So, they had to get the booze in there.

WN: And this is during Prohibition?

LK: This is all during Prohibition. He tell me, "Hey, don't mention. Keep going." (Chuckles) "Go out the beach, go surf."

I had all kinds. Was lot of fun, Prohibition. Geez, at one time, I took this guy right across of the Royal Hawaiian. I made the pinch. The guy had about ten cases of gin. And next you had to take him down the office, put 'em in the marshal's office, big warehouse inside there, lock everything. But you can't touch that liquor. [Then someone] gives you the order to dispose of it. So, we had plenty liquor, plenty booze, but I never drink those days. But had lot of guys who were on the beach that drank. So I would give them, you know. Had lot of the Hawaiians--old Japanese guys and the Hawaiians. Old Japanese, Kikuta. They lived down our way, but they go all down (chuckles) where I tell them. I tell 'em, "Ey, Kikuta,

next week Friday I go [catch] fish."

And he'd [say], "Oh, yeah, yeah. Arigatō, arigatō."

So, he goes out in the morning, you know, with two, three Japanese. They let the old Hawaiians know in Kaka'ako. Down there with their net. Bullshit. And I come down with my truck. So we're going to break all these bottles, Herman Clark and I. There were lot of big boulders around there, big concrete boulders. So, we aim for those things and we miss purposely. Then the bottle will go and land in the water, right across outside there. We had more fun, I tell you, Warren. When we come back in the afternoon after work, all these old guys were sitting out there drunk like hell.

(Laughter)

LK: Somebody call for the old man. But I said, "Ah, they having party, the old folks. Ah, hell. Let them."

WN: So, Prohibition was pretty loose then, eh?

LK: Hoo, yeah.

WN: Pretty lenient, eh?

LK: Well, you see, the Prohibition agents was a different. . . . They were in the Treasury Department. That was a different unit, you know, altogether, with us. We did the arresting. We were in the Justice Department at that time. And then, I would have to [go to the neighbor islands] on the ships because Herman Clark and Tom Clark. . . . By the time the boat, the Lurline or Haleakalā leave Honolulu, they [sea]sick already. And me, beach boy, I never get sick on the ship. So, I had to go on these trips, come up, go and raid over there.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 13-59-1-85; SIDE ONE

WN: So, how long did you work over there?

LK: Shee, I worked till the new administration came in; the Democrats came in. I worked there under Harding, and who the hell was the other president?

WN: Coolidge?

LK: Coolidge came after Harding, eh?

WN: Yeah.

LK: Yeah.

WN: So, during the '20s, then, you worked there?

LK: Yeah.

WN: So as you look back at your life in Waikīkī, what can you say?

LK: Life in Waikīkī, well, you can't duplicate those days. They come and they were gone. Waikīkī became very popular. It became too popular. Lot of things you have down there, the persons who treaded the area was women, going all over the street. Those kind of things. We never had 'em down there. Nothing like that was around Waikīkī. We're close-knit place.

So, Waikīkī, I mean you can't compare today with those days. That's the way I feel. But monetarily, I think it's good. You know, more money coming in; more people coming in.

WN: What do you think of Waikīkī now?

LK: When was I down there? We used to have a get-together every year at the Outrigger Club. I haven't been down there for five years, you know. But when I was active in my real estate, I had business down there. But I fly in the morning, I'm coming back in the afternoon. I never stay over. I could, you know, have a few days.

It was only, right now, oh, I'd say about going on five, six months that I quit smoking. I give 'em to my wife. She say, "What you going to do?"

"I'm going to throw 'em away." Give 'em to the wife.

"What? I been trying to get you go quit smoking."

I said, "Don't talk no more, I going change my mind."

This is it, brother. Yeah. Pau. Feel better. And God, I quit all that. I drink a little, but not like the way I used to go, geez. We work down there in the circuit court. All of us boys worked there, bailiffs and all that. And we used to come to work. One day, we got to make work is Monday. 'Cause if you don't show up Monday, [it means] you had a hangover. Everybody would go. All the lawyers and through the whole legal district, you know. So, you got to make it, no matter what you do on Friday, Saturday, you drink. Monday morning, you go to work. We run the courts. We fix the calendar. Try to taper off on Thursday. Friday, we report to work. Go lunch hour, make long hours for lunch. That was our life in Honolulu when I was with the circuit court. And guys came along, we got more strict. Things had to change, you know.

WN: You still see some of the old beach boys around?

LK: No, no. Well, I was just going over the list, and I was thinking, "Lot of these guys passed away." When guys died, my friends, I used to fly down [to Honolulu]. Then it got so, Warren, was too damn many of them dying. I end up sitting down, say, "Geez." I send flowers; I write letters to the family, you know--wives, especially. I knew, Warren, was costing me lot of money just go down there. I rather just send them the money. Thirty or forty bucks a fare, give 'em the money. Better, then help the family. 'Cause I had a lot of friends and a lot of them have gone.

Just the other day, I sat down. . . . Like I wanted to talk to my cousin Fred [Paoa, another interviewee], you know. I said, "Why don't we all get together?" See, we got together one year. I think was only once or twice in Honolulu. And we had it right on the Ala Wai where the rowing club is. They had the American Legion Hall across the street. So, we put on a big get-together party of the family--Harbottles, and the Kahanamokus, and Paoas. The list got bigger, we operating around 300, 400. I said, "Who we asking?"

"No, this all the family."

(Laughter)

LK: I said, "What!" Ho, boy. I was the head of our family group. Fred Paoa was the Paoas. I call 'em up, say, "Hey, Captain." He was [assistant] chief of police. "Chief, you go take care this. My list is getting too big."

WN: (Laughs) But you did have it? You had the reunion?

LK: We had a big reunion there. But was good, you know. "Everybody, you going bring this; you going bring that; you going bring that."

(Laughter)

LK: After that, I go write letter. I go down, canvass. "Okay, this is your list. You bring 'em." All the fish, get all the old ladies, the wives, and go make fish. Lomi-lomi the. . . . 'Cause Hawaiians always sit together all day long and they talk and talk. When I look around the old days, I see Hawaiians, they sit around with their gin bottles and gin drinks. But now days, you go around, these Hawaiians, they drinking beer. They mix 'em up, (chuckles) scotch, eh? They ought to get drunk first, you know.

WN: You remember the New Year's Day luaus at the Paoas?

LK: Oh, yeah. That was big, God. Yeah.

WN: Plenty to eat?

LK: Oh, yeah. There's always plenty food. When a Hawaiian put on a luau, there's plenty food. Because everybody who comes go home

with a plate. You go behind, hey, go get your dish. Take it home. They get the pig, shee, the salmon. Then when I got a little older, I knew lot of friends up in the Northwest salmon country. And I used to get lot of salmon shipped down to me. Then I sent 'em all around. My sister, she's gone now. Family. "Here, here's your salmon." But now, when I 'ono for salmon, I look. Small like that, six dollars, eight dollars. I said, "No, I ain't going to buy this." As much as I love this salmon, I rather go pipikaula joint in Honolulu one of these days. You know, you also get something else. But, geez, you right up here, these markets. And butterfish, ho.

WN: Well, before I turn off the tape recorder, you have any more, any last things you want to say about your life?

LK: Well, I had a good life. I've been happy. I had some rough times. We all do. We all go through that, you know. All my family, all good people. My cousins, everyone. Maybe 'cause my dad never went after us boys or anyone. We knew he was policeman. We never went out of line, boy. We [didn't] pull what these young guys are pulling now. We never got involved in things like that. All of my cousins, everyone. Oh, Fred went into the police department and came right up, assistant chief. Fred had a good background, everybody. Naturally, we all have to go, but I think those that have gone, they're resting good. I miss a lot of it, you know. When I think back, gee, I used to miss a lot of my family. Gee, I quit writing or I quit calling. I used to call on the phone, just say hello. Even my cousin Fred Paoa, I been wanting to call him. I think, "Oh, no. What are we going to talk about?"

WN: (Chuckles) You can talk about the fact that you both talked to me.

(Laughter)

LK: Yeah. No hurry. If I go home talk to my wife, she going tell me, "You been talking to Warren. You go call your cousin now."

(Laughter)

LK: But I'm not going to ask him what he told [you] or what you told him. Like my cousin, Mary Clarke [another interviewee], this morning. She's had it pretty rough, you know. Losing her son.

WN: Okay, well, thank you very much, Mr. Kahanamoku.

LK: Okay, Warren, I hope that'll help you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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